

Baptist Record

Thursday, March 28, 1991



This mural depicting scenes from the life of Christ was painted by Morris McCain of Tupelo. Prints are available from Morris McCain, c/o Reed's, P. O. Box 230, Tupelo, MS 38802. (Photo by Bill Kline.)

The risen Christ centers Tupelo artist's painting

By Brenda Owen

The scene was incongruous to say the least.

Customers entering Carolyn Shelby's costume shop on South Gloster Street in Tupelo did a double take as they walked through the door.

Rising above the racks of fairy costumes and gorilla suits, a figure of Jesus Christ ascended into heaven.

At second glance, onlookers realized the figure was the center focus of a 12 feet by 15 feet canvas on which Morris McCain, Shelby's fiance, was painting a mural of the life of Christ.

"It's the only place I had to put the canvas while I worked," McCain said, gathering his brushes to put the finishing touches on his latest work.

The mural began as a project for one wall of a small church. The church decided to go with a more conventional wall decoration, but, by that time, McCain was hooked on finishing the painting.

"I've always wanted to do a huge painting like this," McCain said, "This is my way of getting the message of Christ to people."

Besides the central ascension scene, the mural depicts several vignettes of incidents in Jesus' ministry.

In one scene, Jesus tells parables to a group of children. Other scenes include Jesus' birth, his baptism by John, his triumphal procession through Jerusalem, his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, and his crucifixion.

During the two months it took McCain to complete the painting, dozens of people — some from as far away as Chicago — who had heard about the painting stopped by the costume shop to watch McCain work.

The mural was temporarily on display at the south end of the Tupelo Mall. It now hangs at the Church of God of Prophecy, Verona. But other examples of McCain's work are seen by hundreds of people every Sunday morning in churches all over north Mississippi. During the past 20 years he has painted about 30 baptism scenes in churches in Verona, Corinth, Baldwin, Okolona, and Nettleton, as well as other areas.

"The baptism paintings are basically the same — mountains in the background, trees, water," McCain said. He added that some churches request figures of Jesus, and sometimes John, in the picture. "I only charged \$60 for the first one I did in 1970. I lost money."

But what he gained was worth much more, he said.

"I don't think an artist's ability to paint is as important as the ability to instill emotion in people who see his work," McCain said. "My greatest reward comes when I see the reaction of the congregation the first time one of my baptism scenes is unveiled."

It was during his lunch hour almost 30 years ago that 47-year-old McCain began his ministry of art.

McCain was working with a construction project at the Gilmore Memorial Hospital. After eating his lunch, he picked up his art pad and began sketching.

Businessman E. J. Gilmore walked by, saw the sketch and asked McCain to copy a couple of family portraits. Today McCain's charcoal sketches of Gilmore's parents hang in the Amory Museum.

Gilmore also offered to send McCain to New Orleans to study art.

"I went into the Air Force instead," McCain said.

While he was stationed in Duluth, Minnesota, McCain painted murals for several nightclubs and sold some private portraits, but his heart was in religious painting.

While living in Flint, Michigan, a few years later, he painted a crucifixion scene using a butter knife on a 4 feet by 4 feet sheet of plywood. The Michigan highway commissioner who bought the painting still has it hanging over his fireplace, McCain said.

McCain returned to Mississippi 22 years ago to work for Reed's Department Store in Tupelo, where he is still employed as manager of the shoe department.

A couple of years later, when a friend needed someone to paint a scene for a church baptism, McCain was finally able to use his talent as a ministry.

McCain had a chance to expand his ministry when Shelby was picked to design and make the puppets for the "Lenny the Lion" video series, used by police departments, schools, and churches nationwide to promote drug awareness for children. McCain painted the background scenes for the videos.

McCain doesn't think he could have been a preacher like his brother. "I never was much at talking in front of crowds," he said.

Hearing the comment, Shelby said, "They both have a ministry. His brother preaches the word. Morris paints the word."

Quirking an eyebrow at his gigantic canvas, McCain smiled. "Well, they say a picture is worth a thousand words," he said. "If that's so, I guess I do a lot of talking, after all."

Owen writes for the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal. This article reprinted from the Daily Journal.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Death and the resurrection

Few there are who do not fear death. So dreaded is death that we cease to speak plainly and have developed euphemisms and circumlocutions to avoid using the word. Somehow we think it will just go away if we do not speak of it.

Death is a fearful and dreaded experience. However, we can affirm with the apostle Paul, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:57). Christ has planted the flag of victory over the grave and because he was victorious, Christians will also be victorious.

The empty tomb was not too convincing. Some thought his body had been

stolen. It was the contact with the risen Christ which made the difference. Some vacant grave near Jerusalem is not our hope, but the experience with the Christ who conquered the grave.

The resurrection was God's shout of "Amen" to the claims of Jesus. He validated his ministry.

It tells us that the cross has atoned, and God vindicated him. Christ "was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

The resurrection gives meaning to "good news," for without it, there would be no gospel to proclaim. And

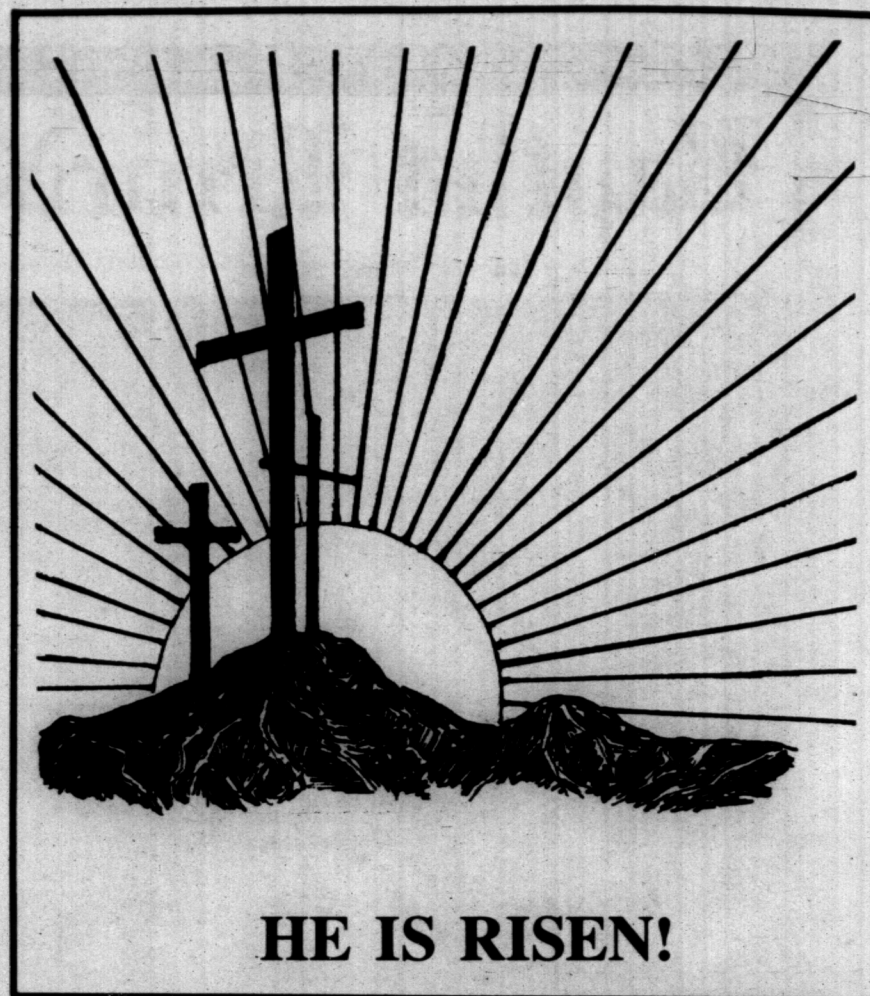
it tells us he is alive, available, and approachable today.

The resurrection of Christ is the first fruit of many to follow. If we belong to him, then our future is assured in him. Die we will, but beyond death there is the fullness of eternal life.

Christ's resurrection is the pledge of God that there will be continuity of life and the guarantee of his return. Until then, fear not, "ye seek Jesus of Nazareth. He is not here; he is risen."

Death cannot keep his prey, he tore the bars away.

Up from the grave he arose, with a mighty triumph o'er his foes.



The sharpened axe

Recently, Dr. Bill Causey spoke to his staff on Ecclesiastes 10:10:

"If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength."

A paraphrase of this says, "A dull axe requires great strength; be wise and sharpen the blade." Now, any wood chopper would have little trouble in understanding this proverb, and with a bit of explanation, others would catch it. An old Russian saying declares, "He who chops his own wood is warmed twice by it." While that has little to do with theology, it does make more intellectual callouses on your hands.

As followers of Christ, we have the right equipment! Is it as sharp as it ought to be? If not, we will have to work harder, depending more on human strength. To sharpen the axe you have to temporarily suspend

chopping. Must we suspend our regular task, draw aside for a while, in order to do greater work for the future? Of course, the sermonizer had to have a word. An axe and a grindstone (emory wheel) will cause some sparks to fly. It can be irritating. Medicine is not always pleasant.

Bluntness, caused by years of neglect, will take a while and the pain will be there. Discipline is vital to discipleship. Burning up more energy and seeing less results is the price you pay, when chopping with a dull axe.

Perhaps the word priority has been overworked but only because it is so important. Sharpening our skills should take a high place on the schedule. The equation of force and the cutting ability of the axe withers in light of this proverb. Time and energy can be expended until we are

exhausted and have little to show for it. Wisdom takes a different route and can conduct matters to a successful conclusion.

It spite of this, most ecclesiastical John Bunyans are more interested in chopping than in sharpening. Few prizes are awarded for the sharpest axe or, in the words of a pulp wood hauler, "It's not how many licks, but the size of the wood pile that counts." Wisdom always gives a person a decided advantage.

Jesus told the disciples to come aside for a while. Like a sponge, you can be squeezed out until you have nothing left to give. Paul said, "I conferred not with flesh and blood, but drew aside in the Arabian desert." He had a sharp axe when he came out. Prayer, confession, waiting upon the Lord, will enable us to be at our best in Christian service.

Sunday School conference talks of mega churches

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist churches that average 2,000 or more in Sunday School attendance have almost 50 percent more unchurched people in their Sunday Schools than the SBC average, participants in a Feb. 21-23 conference at the Sunday School Board learned.

"That means you are really in a better posture for church growth than the average Southern Baptist church," Jim Fitch, manager in the Sunday School Board's Sunday School growth

and administration department, told participants in the mega church minister of education Sunday School consultation. Religious educators from 25 of the SBC's largest churches attended the conference to interact with Sunday School Board leadership and discuss issues unique to larger churches.

Fitch said the number of mega church Sunday Schools in the SBC is gradually increasing, rising from 17 (See **MEGA CHURCHES** on page 10)

My Saviour

By Billy P. Smith

It was a day like most any other day during the Passover, except I was a prisoner in a Roman jail in Jerusalem. I had been convicted of insurrection and murder, and I was supposed to die. My cell was near the courtyard that led to the judgment seat of Pontius Pilate, the governor who judged crimes.

As the sun began to creep into the dungeon, I heard crowds coming in to the courtyard. The Sanhedrin had met the day before to decide the fate of a man called Jesus, so they brought him in chains before Pilate, demanding he place judgment on Him.

Pilate said, "What do you accuse this man of doing?" I heard the people say, "Blasphemy! He claims to be the Son of God."

I heard nothing for a few moments, then I heard Pilate say, "Should I release to you this man who is your King?" (as it was the custom of the Romans to release a prisoner on the

day of Passover). To my astonishment they said, "No, release Barabbas."

Why, that was me!

Then Pilate said, "If I release Barabbas, what shall I do with Jesus?" They shouted, "Crucify him!"

"But he has done no wrong." They shouted even harder, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

Then I heard someone come down the corridor. A key turned in the lock, the door swung open, and a big Roman guard said, "You are free to go." I hurried down the hallway, up the steps into the courtyard, and I should have been long gone, but my curiosity overwhelmed me.

As I rounded the corner, I could see Pilate washing his hands, saying, "I wash my hands of this man." The people screamed, "Let his blood be upon our hands and our children's."

Pilate had Jesus flogged and turn-

ed him over to the soldiers to be crucified. But before they carried him to be executed, they carried him into the armory. I peeked into a window. They took off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him. One of the men put a crown of thorns on his head; another gave him a reed for a scepter. They bowed before him and yelled, "Hail! King of the Jews."

They hit him with their fists, beat him on the head with the reed, spat in his face, cursed and mocked him. Almost as suddenly as they began their sport, they seemed to tire of it. They took the robe off, put his clothes back on him, and gave him a cross to carry.

As the procession weaved through the streets of Jerusalem, I followed. I saw Jesus stumble and fall, weak from the beatings. He picked himself up, went a few paces, and fell again.

The Roman soldiers grabbed a black man from the crowd, and com-

pelled him to bear the cross to the place the Jews called Golgotha. I slipped around the crowd and found a place I could watch everything.

They nailed his hands and feet to the cross, suspended him between heaven and earth. Some of the people yelled up at him, crying, "You said, tear down the temple, and you would build it back in three days."

"Come on down and save yourself." The priest also mocked him, "He saved others but He can't save Himself . . . so you are the King of Israel, are you? Come on down and we'll believe you."

And they yelled all kinds of abuse at him, and watched him hang there. They hung a sign above him. It read, "JESUS, KING OF THE JEWS." I had been told Jesus had 12 followers, but I saw only one man and some women.

It was about 9 o'clock when the crucifixion began. About 12 o'clock,

the whole world became dark.

At 3 o'clock Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

One of the bystanders said, "He calls for Elijah." Another filled a sponge with vinegar and put it on a stick.

The crowd cried, "Let Him alone and see if Elijah will come get Him!" Then Jesus cried out again, hung his head, and died. There was a terrible earthquake; the world shook, rocks turned loose, graves were opened. Everyone was frightened.

The sergeant of the soldiers said, "This surely must be the Son of God."

There were three men that died there that day, but my attention was on the one in the center, for I was supposed to be where he was. Jesus had taken my place. He actually died for me.

Smith is a member of Pleasant Grove Church, Lincoln Association.

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State WMU hears O'Brien, re-elects Tyler president

By Anne W. McWilliams

"Today we have many challenges before us. What about poverty . . . illiteracy . . . homelessness . . . the growth of the Muslim religion in America . . . ?" Dellanna O'Brien, speaking at the annual meeting of Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, herself placed before the women a definite challenge: "The Muslims have a call to prayer at periodic times every day. I suggest to you that we Christians have at least two calls to prayer a day. If you don't

have a consistent time of prayer every day, I challenge you to find one . . . We need to be sensitive to the urging of the Holy Spirit to call ourselves to Him."

Hundreds of women from across the state gathered at First Church, Jackson, March 18-19. It was the first time O'Brien had been guest speaker at this state's convention. She was elected executive director, WMU, SBC, in 1989.

The women heard missionary addresses, honored their state executive director, and took a close-up look at partnerships with Illinois and Zimbabwe. Also they voted for a bylaws change that asked for three state officers rather than the two elected the past few years.

They re-elected Joan Tyler of Collins as president, and elected Betty Dobbs of Clinton as vice-president and

(See WMU on page 4)



Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union last week elected as its officers for the coming year Joan Tyler, right, Collins, president (re-elected); Betty Dobbs, center, Clinton, vice president; Vivian Taylor, left, Clara, secretary.

The Second Front Page

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Alliance strengthens ties with American Baptists

By Robert H. Dilday

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) — Southern Baptist Alliance members have strengthened relations with American Baptists and eliminated a reference to the Southern Baptist Convention in their statement of purpose.

The action was taken during the group's March 14-16 annual convocation at Grace Church in Richmond, Va. It was the fifth national meeting of the organization of moderate-conservative Southern Baptists since its founding in 1987.

The approximately 500 members registered for the three-day meeting appeared ready to abandon confrontation with fundamental-conservative leaders now dominant in the SBC and seek a new, though still unspecified, future.

A recommendation from the SBA board of directors that members at the convocation "affirm cooperative ventures in ministry and missions" with the ABC was approved without dissent, as was a move to eliminate a constitutional provision dedicating the Alliance to "the continuance of our ministry and mission within the Southern Baptist Convention."

The phrase was replaced by one which commits the group to "the expression of our ministry and mission

through cooperative relationships with other Baptist bodies and the larger Christian community."

Yet a reluctance to sever all ties with the SBC was apparent. Despite their constitutional change, members accepted a committee recommendation that they retain the word "Southern" in their name.

The lure of the Baptist Fellowship, another moderate-conservative organization within the SBC formed last August, also proved hard to resist. The interim steering committee of the Fellowship, which plans a national convocation in May, recently named a committee to initiate dialogue with the SBA. SBA President Richard E. Groves reported plans to appoint a committee of Alliance members to respond.

In addition to cooperating with American Baptists in missionary appointments, the Alliance has developed a partnership with the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba. The group consists of about a dozen congregations recently excluded from the larger Baptist Convention of Western Cuba.

Convocation participants enthusiastically welcomed Thomas H. Graves, introduced as the recently-

elected president of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Graves told the SBA audience classes will begin this September with seven faculty members. The Alliance authorized the seminary in 1987 and remains a sponsoring body. However, it does not own or govern the school, housed at Northminster Church in Richmond. The seminary's board of trustees is self-perpetuating.

In other action, the Alliance: — Heard a report from finance committee chair Brooks Wicker of Tallahassee, Fla., that the Alliance had 69,353 members and 126 affiliated churches at the end of February. Of its members, 42,434, or 61 percent, live in North Carolina or Virginia, while 85, or 65 percent, of its churches are located either in those two states or Maryland.

— Participated in a closing worship service that featured communion, liturgical dancing and a sermon by Linda Jordan, pastor of Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, N.C.

The Alliance's next convocation will be during March 1992 at Providence Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C.

Dilday writes for RELIGIOUS HERALD, Virginia.

Ethiopian war disrupts missions

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP) — As Ethiopia's long-running civil war nears an apparently decisive showdown between government and rebel forces, Southern Baptist missionaries were preparing to leave the African nation in mid-March.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board policy leaves final decisions on whether to stay or leave a country up to the missionaries themselves. But if the Ethiopia missionaries' lives are in danger "they have been advised to get out immediately," said mission official Jim Houser in Nairobi, Kenya. Residents of Addis Ababa, the

Ethiopian capital, reported a shortage of information about what is happening and where, but the sense of urgency has increased in recent weeks. The United States Embassy reportedly advised all Americans to leave the country.

The British Broadcasting Corporation reported the work of the International Red Cross in the country had been disrupted when field workers were cut off from headquarters by advancing rebel troops.

One expatriate, who asked to remain unidentified, said the capital ci-

ty was overflowing with rumors. "The Ethiopians are telling us it will get bad soon and to get out," the source said. "The European Economic Community dependents are going out and the United Nations workers are meeting to decide what to do. It seems like all foreign groups are leaving."

Southern Baptist mission personnel began securing exit visas and trying to confirm plane reservations in mid-March.

Missionary Betty Barham of Son-tag, planned to depart for Kenya March 23.

Missionaries poised for democratization

By Mike Creswell

BRUSSELS, Belgium (BP) — The first Southern Baptist missionaries arrived in Bulgaria in early March as the Foreign Mission Board continues a major buildup of personnel and ministry throughout Eastern Europe.

Even a year ago, sending missionaries to Bulgaria was only a dream. Now the dream is a reality as the nation moves slowly towards democratization and puts aside its anti-religion stance like other countries in the region.

Career missionaries William and June Wardlaw of Texarkana, Texas, and West Palm Beach, Fla., respectively, transferred from Japan to Sofia, Bulgaria. They will serve as fraternal representatives to 700 Bulgarian Baptists in 16 churches and mission congregations. The Wardlaws will work in evangelism and education after they complete language study.

Joining the Wardlaws are two International Service Corps workers, Lybia Pyon and Spencer Stith, who will work in student ministry.

The many other signs of progress

include:

— George and Veda Rae Lozuk, first Southern Baptist workers assigned to the Soviet Union, arrived in mid-February in Moscow, where they have launched a series of meetings with Baptist leaders about future ministries. The Lozucs were delayed in their arrival in the Soviet Union because he underwent cancer surgery. They worked earlier in evangelism and media in South America.

— In Poland, missionaries Tom and Joyce Cleary are nearing completion of Polish language study and soon will begin their ministry in literacy education. Missionaries Mark and Susan Edworthy are scheduled to arrive in Poland by May 1 to begin language study for work in general evangelism. Volunteers Robin Barr and Laurie Berry are working in literacy training in conjunction with the English-language school of Wroclaw Baptist Church.

— Bob and Marsha Ford, mis-

(See MISSIONARIES on page 8)

Lottie Moon gifts will drop below '89

By Marty Croll

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — For the first time in 53 years, Southern Baptists will fail to surpass their giving from the previous year to the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, according to projections.

A projected 1.4 percent downturn in Lottie Moon receipts from 1990 — instead of an expected 7 percent increase — will leave the Foreign Mission Board with about \$79 million, or \$7 million less than it had planned to spend in 1991.

"It's hard to decipher what's happening as far as giving among Southern Baptists is concerned," said Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks. "The truth is, we don't know the reasons (for the shortfall). We don't have any kind of actual, statistical, scientific data."

Parks listed such possible factors as the approach of the Persian Gulf war late last year, an unsteady economy and uncertainties in the denomination.

Such a shortfall probably means

that of \$8.2 million in Lottie Moon funds earmarked for capital projects, only about \$1.3 million would be available. This "would sure be discouraging to our missionary force," said Parks.

The Lottie Moon offering, generally collected by Southern Baptist congregations during December, was expected to account for nearly half of the \$182.7 million budget for foreign missions in 1991.

The 1991 budget approved by FMB trustees last October reflected a 4.5 percent increase from 1990, built largely on the expectation of \$86 million in Lottie Moon receipts. That would represent about 47 percent of the board's expected receipts for 1991.

Despite the projected shortfall, Parks said it is still remarkable that Southern Baptists give as much as they do in "the largest single offering of its kind that we know of in Christendom."

Croll writes for FMB.

Mississippi WMU hears O'Brien for first time

From page 3

Vivian Taylor of Clara as secretary. Each session began with a dramatic monologue designed to interpret the theme, "Empowered." Deborah Brunt of Corinth in each dramatically portrayed a woman of Bible times: Priscilla, a woman who relied on the Holy Spirit; Eunice, a woman who learned about missions; Lydia, a woman who recognized entry points; and Esther, a woman who risked all she had.

leaders and disciple new Christians; people to do construction work, in cooperation with the Foreign Mission Board, to build churches; people to lead in agricultural projects to search for crops that will grow best under weather and soil conditions in Zimbabwe.

"We anticipate 400 to 500 from Mississippi to be there over the next few years," Harrell said. "Many of you may be a part of that 500. The Great Commission says to go and make disciples of all nations. Zimbabwe is one of those nations."

Wana Ann Fort, missionary doctor now retired and living in Dallas, talked about "Diversity and Risk in Zimbabwe." She and her husband, Giles Fort, also a doctor, went out as pioneer missionaries in Zimbabwe, then called Rhodesia. In early years, they opened a small clinic and then a hospital there. "Winds of change began to blow over Africa. With the rise of nationalism, men left to go to China, Russia, Cuba, to be trained for guerilla warfare . . . Things began to change."

Risks, she said, began to appear at the peak of their ministry in 1978. Response to their work was so exciting that they delayed their furlough. But when they were finally on furlough, they heard that Archie Dunaway, their fellow missionary, a Mississippian, had been murdered in their hospital. Many missionaries were evacuated from the country; many of them transferred to other countries. Several years later, the hospital was turned over by the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, to the national Baptist convention of Zimbabwe.

She described illnesses that are also (See WMU on page 5)

Offerings taken were sent to Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, designated for the Second Century Fund (which provides scholarships), in honor of Marjean Patterson, who has completed 20 years as Mississippi WMU executive director, and 34 years on the state WMU staff.

Music was under direction of Gwen Keys Hitt of Collins. Instrumentalists were Judy Arrington of Collins and James Arrington Goff of Madison. Susan and Tony Kinton of Philadelphia presented special music. A mass GA choir sang on Monday evening.

Special features focused on Mississippi partnerships with Illinois and Zimbabwe. Representatives from Illinois included Evelyn Tully of Springfield and Carol Reese of Chicago.

Tully, executive director, Illinois WMU, said, "What I like about Mississippi is the hugging and the hospitality! In this partnership with you, we are not asking for money, but for encouragement, love, and prayer support. We will need women to work in literacy missions, men and women in construction projects such as our WMU camp, and in numerous other ways." Though Tully didn't ask for money, Patterson presented to her a check for \$1,000, for missions in Illinois, from the Edwina Robinson Special Day Offering, collected in this state each May.

Then Paul Harrell, Mississippi Brotherhood director, who had just returned from 10 days in Zimbabwe, reported on the partnership being formed there with the Magnolia State. He listed as needs there: "People to come and help plant churches, since there is so much receptivity to the gospel there now; people to help with evangelistic outreach; people to train



Marjean Patterson, executive director, Mississippi WMU, left, greets Dellanna O'Brien, executive director, Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, Birmingham, with a hug. Mrs. O'Brien was in Jackson to speak at the annual WMU convention. It was her first appearance at such a Mississippi gathering.



Deborah Brunt, of Corinth dressed in purple, portrays Lydia. In other sessions, she did monologues on the Bible women, Priscilla, Eunice, and Esther, to interpret the convention theme, "Empowered."



Joan Tyler, right, state WMU president, presents to Marjean Patterson, the gift of a stained glass magnolia. This gift from the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, was in recognition of Miss Patterson's 34 years on the state WMU staff, 20 years as its executive director. (Photos by Anne McWilliams)



Flag-bearers in military uniform stand at attention during the singing of "God Bless America," at end of closing session.



Mildred McWhorter, home missionary, Houston, attends lunch for parents of missionaries.



Monica Keathley, state WMU consultant, leads in the commissioning of volunteers who plan to serve in East St. Louis, Chicago, Mississippi, and Zimbabwe.

capsules

APRIL 30 DEADLINE TO COMMIT FOR CROSSOVER ATLANTA: ATLANTA (BP) — April 30 is the deadline for volunteers to sign up for Crossover Atlanta, the evangelistic effort preceding this year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Despite rumors that have circulated in some states, Crossover Atlanta has not been cancelled, said Bobby Sunderland, project manager and Southern Baptist Home Mission Board staff member. In fact, the multi-faceted event recently has been expanded to include feeding Atlanta's homeless and poor from mobile disaster relief units, Sunderland said. This ministry will be done by Baptist Men's groups from several state conventions. The basic element of Crossover Atlanta is three days of door-to-door witnessing in eight metropolitan Atlanta associations. Additional projects include one-day Soul Winning Encounter, street evangelism, construction of four to seven church buildings and a telemarketing project to start a new congregation.

SANDI PATTI: INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (EP) — People in show business often tell one another to "break a leg" before a performance. Gospel singing star Sandi Patti went a step further, and will have a cast on her broken left foot for a month. Patti, who won a Grammy Award for her album "Another Time . . . Another Place," said she hit her foot on a cedar chest in her home in mid-February, then aggravated the injury by wearing heels to the Grammy Awards ceremony in New York City. Her foot is broken in two places.

GRANT SINGS SONGS OF INNOCENCE: NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) — Christian singing star Amy Grant says her new album, "Heart in Motion," is "about people for people . . . This album is about life experience without any hidden spiritual agenda." Though well-known for her devotional songs, Grant felt a need for innocent songs about human relationships. She told CCM magazine she wanted to make an album about "young love, early relationships, songs for every aspect of life. You're not going to hear a lot of songs on top 40 radio right now selling innocent fun," she said. "We still have a need for songs like 'I want to hold your hand' and 'Wouldn't it be nice.' We grew up with music like that, but you can't find innocence now if you're diggin' for it."

WHITE OAK, S.C. (BP) — RAY P. RUST, executive secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, announced his retirement plans effective Feb. 29, 1992. Rust, who will be 66 in August, said he wants to turn his attention to some matters of personal interest, including volunteer service on a church staff or short-term missionary service. He said he and his wife, Joy, will continue to live in Columbia. A native of Shreveport, La., Rust assumed the position of executive secretary-treasurer March 1, 1982. Prior to that, he was president of Anderson (S.C.) College for four years.

AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ARE BECOMING MORE INTERNATIONALIZED as the world becomes smaller through technology and ease of travel. Diverse cultures are coming together. Exchange students are helping to bring cultures together by living and sharing in communities. For more information about International Student Exchange's programs and to inquire about hosting a student in your home call 800-284-1059.

THE 49TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS WAS HELD MARCH 5-7 IN ST. LOUIS, MO. — With evangelism as a year-long emphasis for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the 49-year-old evangelical umbrella organization celebrated the theme, "Proclaiming Jesus Christ . . . Together!" In a position paper adopted by the convention, the scope of evangelism was defined to "present Jesus Christ so that sinners repent, accept him as Savior, acknowledge him as Lord, and become responsible members of his church." NAE went on to acknowledge its own responsibility to demonstrate evangelical oneness in Christ. "Furthermore," the position paper continued, "we are supportive of the many efforts of the evangelical community to evangelize our country by the year 2000 and beyond."

PATRIOTIC ANTHEM RELEASED: NASHVILLE — The arrangers of a new anthem being released by Genevox Music Group believe the piece can help churches give musical expression to the wave of patriotism sweeping America. "One Nation Under God" is "an emotional statement of patriotism and a celebration of America," according to Dennis Allen, who created and arranged the extended-length anthem with his wife, Nan. The anthem, which runs approximately eight minutes in performance, will be available in Baptist Book Stores and other outlets in April. Four patriotic favorites are included in the anthem: "America the Beautiful," "My Country 'Tis of Thee," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and "The Star Spangled Banner." They are woven together with a new fanfare written by the Allens and excerpts of speeches by famous American statesmen. At one point in the anthem, both the choir and congregation are asked to stand and recite the pledge of allegiance to the American flag. The anthem can be ordered by calling 1-800-458-2772.

A NEW DAY DAWNS FOR THE BIBLE IN CUBA: NEW YORK (ABS) — After 30 years of limited supplies of Bibles in Cuba, the United Bible Societies is gaining unprecedented access to provide the Scriptures to the nation's 10.5 million people. Over the next 12 months, the UBS plans to provide 51,600 Bibles, 20,000 New Testaments, 30,000 portions and New Reader Portions, and one million Selections. These figures include Scriptures for both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. The UBS, activating an emergency fund, has committed more than \$300,000 to support this unexpected need, and is appealing to its members to support the fund.

THE DEL NORTE BAPTIST CHURCH, formerly Bel Air Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N.M., will celebrate its 40th anniversary on July 21, 1991. Call the church office (505) 881-9711 for more information. Kenneth L. Chafin, the church's first pastor, and Kenneth Trinkle, first music director, will take part in the celebration.

Over 900 attend first GA Day at Central Hills



This group of GAs from North Greenwood Church, Greenwood, joined more than 900 Girls in Action and their leaders for a GA Day at Central Hills recently. Activities included meeting missionaries, recreation, learning about the Cooperative Program, games, face painting, and meeting other GAs from across the state.



Marilyn Graves and her daughter, Lucy, told GAs at Central Hills about their mission work in Chile. The Graveses are on furlough, living in Starkville.

WMU

From page 4

risks, for missionaries. Don't you be afraid to go to Zimbabwe!" she told the women at the convention. "I've been talking to you about the risks, but it's not like that now!"

Fort's husband did not come with her to Jackson, for he has a chronic degenerative illness. However, in conclusion, she said, through tears, "If God chooses to glorify himself through my husband's disability, then that is God's business. In illness, in difficulty, in risks — that joy he gives is there. His grace is there for every diversity, every change, every risk."

Mildred McWhorter, missionary in inner city Houston, told of a Georgia woman who came there to work with children, and an 8-year-old who liked her so much she asked, "Are you for real?" As a result, the Georgia woman prayed, "Lord, I want to be real. I don't want to be just mission-minded. I want to be mission-doing."

McWhorter pleaded with her Jackson listeners: "Have your programs. Promote them. But don't ever get where you can't go out there and help a needy child. There's something you can do to use your real talents. I need you to do literacy work, to cook, sew, answer the phone, patch a screen door. But you don't have to come to Houston. You can find a hungry child or an alcoholic or a lonely person in your own neighborhood."

Marilyn Graves, missionary to Chile, and Nita Boudreaux, missionary to Guyana, said, "The missions task is not always easy. We must do some role juggling constantly." (they juggled a few balls to illustrate!). Donning a mixture of name tags, they discussed their duties as disciple, homemaker, shopper, secretary, mother, WMU worker, hostess, nurse, taxi driver, wife, teacher.

A luncheon on Wednesday honored parents of Mississippi missionaries. Paul and Hannah Gay, missionaries

to Ethiopia, said that prospects of peace in Ethiopia appear very distant. "The Communists continue their pressures on the evangelicals. Resistance movements keep trying to gain independence for their regions, and prospects for the evangelicals under a new regime are not encouraging."

"Ethiopian Christians rely on the Holy Spirit," they said, as they revealed some of the hardships those Christians have gone through. Yet, though they were telling sad stories about the Ethiopians, Paul said, "Don't feel sorry for them. Rather feel envy, for they claim victory of Jesus Christ — the victory you can only know when you have trusted him and found him faithful. These are people who have yielded themselves. They traded their weakness for his power, traded their ignorance for his knowledge and wisdom, traded their defeat for his victory."

Next year's WMU annual meeting is to be held at First Church, Clinton.

N.O. trustees plan second meeting

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — New Orleans Seminary trustees approved a statement regarding political activity, agreed to hold a second meeting this year, and received a report of presidential goals for the 1990s during their annual meeting.

Trustees also adopted a \$7.2 million budget for the 1991-92 fiscal year, approved various changes in seminary documents and elected board officers for the new year. The March 13-14 meeting was marked by a full agenda but few divided votes.

In a unanimous vote, trustees responded to a motion referred from the 1990 Southern Baptist Convention. In the motion, Cactus J. Cagle of Texas asked trustees of all denominational entities to "determine whether their entity, its facilities, assets, or personnel were used during the year 1989-90 to engage in any political activity with the Southern Baptist Convention." Trustees were asked to respond to the motion in writing.

The New Orleans Seminary board laid the groundwork for its response at the outset of its meeting by providing a copy of the seminary's articles of faith and the Baptist Faith and Message for trustees to sign. Chairman Charles Wood of Kansas

noted seminary bylaws call for all seminary staff, faculty, and trustees to prescribe to the faith statements. "We have not had the privilege of fulfilling that (in the past)," Wood said. "By signing today, we will fulfill what is in our bylaws."

Later, trustees approved a response to the Cagle motion that makes note of the signing. The response reads:

"The matter of the stance of the seminary in regard to possible political involvement of faculty in the Southern Baptist Convention controversy was thoroughly discussed by the trustees on at least two specific occasions (June 20, 1989, and Sept. 14, 1989). This is documented in the minutes. The consensus of the discussions was that faculty members, administrators, and trustees be asked to refrain from political activities (on either side of the SBC controversy). Though all are free to express their opinions, none should promote divisiveness. All faculty members and administrators (and all trustees present at the March 13, 1991 meeting) have affixed their signatures to the Baptist Faith and Message Statement and the New Orleans Seminary's Articles of Religious Beliefs.

"These are the doctrinal

parameters within which the seminary operates."

Board minutes indicate discussion of political activity arose with questions about a faculty member's address to a gathering of Southern Baptist moderates in Louisiana. At their June 1989 meeting, executive committee members tabled a motion to apprise the faculty member of the discussion of the matter.

In September 1989, the board's executive committee again discussed the matter and agreed that it "be put away for good, not ever to be brought up again."

In addition to conducting various business, trustees received an extensive report on Leavell's goals for the seminary. As presented by the president, the over-arching goal for the school is to "maintain and develop a biblically-centered, denominationally-vital, and continuously-growing theological seminary."

In other action, trustees: — Re-elected Wood as board chairman and Glynn Rhinehart of Louisiana as secretary-treasurer. Trustees also elected J. Roy McComb of Mississippi as vice chairman. All three also were elected officers of the board's executive committee.



Faces and places

by Anne Washburn McWilliams



Easter and sunlight go together

April will return next week, marking a year since my brother-in-law, Speedy, died. I'm thinking of him today and the column I wrote about standing by his graveside in the rain. In the last paragraph I said, "Somewhere up there beyond the clouds, I know the sun shines."

Always, in my mind, sunlight and Easter go together. A death preceded that first Easter morning, a death by crucifixion.

As Jesus was being crucified, a thief hanging on a cross next to his was the only one to speak up and defend His innocence. Jesus, seeing the thief's repentance and belief, promised him, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Never until last week did I learn that "paradise" is a Persian word for "walled garden."

"A walled garden!" I thought. "How happy Daddy must be then in heaven, with his love for flowers. Since he could never carry a tune, he'd like that much better than singing in a heavenly choir."

Thinking of Daddy reminded me of the story Mildred McWhorter told at WMU convention, about Little George. Mildred is a missionary who works in inner city Houston.

"Little George came to me," her



story began. "He said, 'Miss Mc, would you get me a new daddy?'"

"You know I can't do that! Your daddy'd kill me if I did that! Why do you want me to get you a new one anyway?"

"He turned off the TV last night and he hit me and knocked my sandwich out of my hand."

"But I don't know what to do. I don't know how to get you a new daddy," I told him.

"He said, 'You know Jesus, and he knows what to do, don't he? You can ask him.'"

"George went outside and waited 15 minutes and came back in and said, 'Has he told you yet?' and I answered, 'No, honey.' He went out and waited a few minutes and came back again and asked, 'Has he told you yet?' And I didn't know what to do or what to tell him. I prayed, 'Lord, I can't disappoint Little George. I'm depending on you. Give me an answer.'"

"Once again he came back with his question, 'Has he told you yet?' and I said, 'No, honey.'"

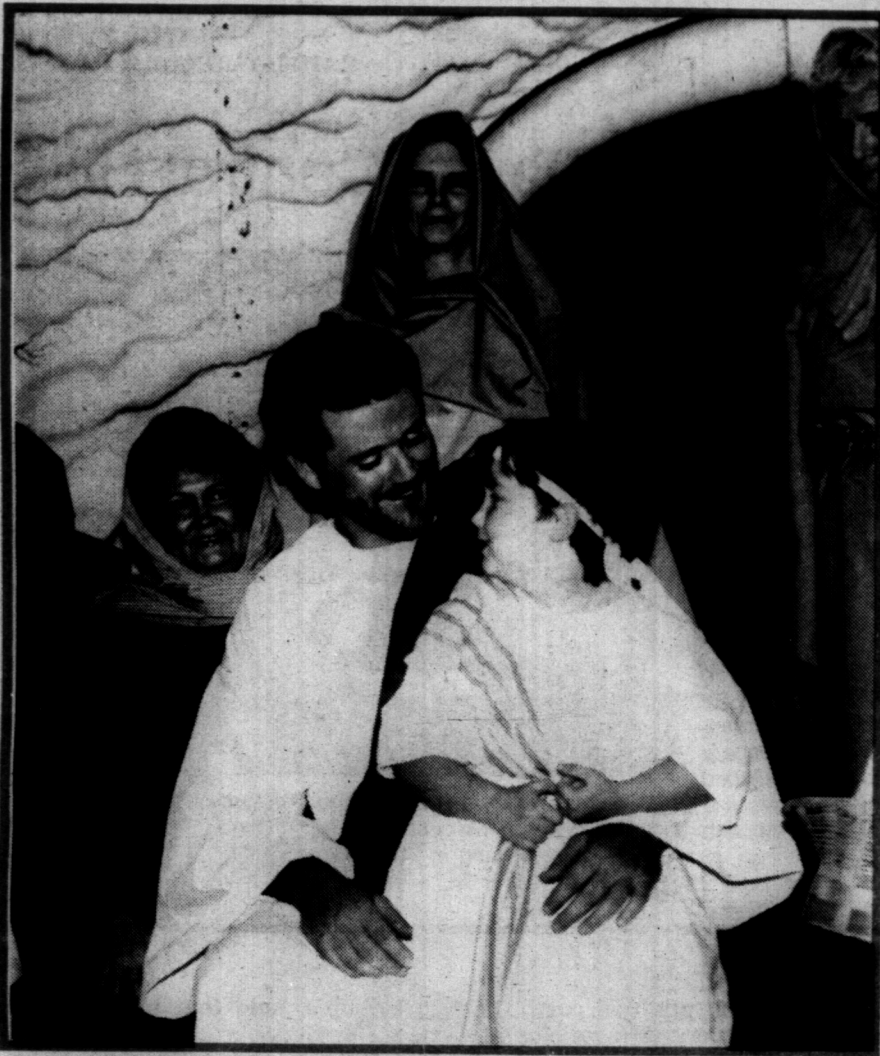
"Well, I'll just sit here till he does."

"He really put me on the spot. So I got my Bible and started to flip through it, and God gave me the answer. I read, 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature . . .'"

"So I set about to win Big George to Jesus. And now Little George has a new daddy."

New creatures — springtime, sunlight on a Sunday morning, new life — in Him "all things are become new." My mind turns back to Easter and an empty garden tomb in Jerusalem, outside the city wall. Inside it, above the doorway, someone has posted a sign: "He is not here. He is risen."

Because He is risen, I'll see Speedy and Daddy again.



"Watch the Lamb"

Stonewall's First Church Sanctuary Choir and the Hosanna Drama Team will present the Easter drama, "Watch the Lamb," March 31 and April 1 at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free, but tickets are required for each performance. Contact the church at (601) 659-7607. Shown above are participants in the drama — David Robinson as Jesus, and Matthew Rigdon as a village boy. Albert McMullen is pastor, Jeanie Thomas is director of music and drama.

For Starkville's Glenn Schmidt, all of life is competition

By Guy Henderson

Competition is the key word in the philosophy of Glenn Schmidt, Starkville basketball coach. She has been coach of girls' basketball at Starkville High since 1978 and also coached the boys the past year.

Schmidt was chosen "Basketball Coach of the Year" for the past three years in District IV, 5A. Her record in those three years was 33-6, 37-2, and 35-2. Her career coaching record is 338-103. In 1988, she won the National High School Coaching Award, "The Franklin Select Circle," in the Scholastic Coach magazine. She is an honor graduate of Mississippi College, 1976. In her "spare" time, she was a participant in the Olympic Development Training Camp and the World University Games Training Camp.

The coach declared her philosophy to be, "You can't base everything on winning or losing. Mine is a hard work ethic. Don't lose sight of the athlete; he or she is important and I want to get the best out of them and give my best to them."

Ray Lloyd, pastor of First, Starkville, described Schmidt as having her greatest impact on the community. "She is a faithful believer and teaches a Bible class. I believe she is one of the top coaches in the country and equally a fine Christian. Her character, her value system, and her life in general bear a faithful witness."

Sharon Billups, one of her players, described her as being a "very good coach who works hard, and she expects the team to work hard. The good thing about her," Billups said, "is you



Coach Glenn Schmidt

could always go to her and talk."

Schmidt said she feels that God has called her to coach. "If it were not for his help, I would have given it up a long time ago. I try to pattern my life by his teachings. I hope my teams see me as an example on and off the playing field."

School spirit, administrative support, and community support have been excellent. "They give me all I need for a good consistent program and we try to provide our very best. I respect the school's position and I don't try to force anything on anybody

but I commit the season to the Lord. I can't do it without his help."

A jogger, Schmidt wants to be in shape and disciplines each area of her life. She expects her athletes to hustle, maintain a good attitude on and off the playing field, to love their teammates, and to respect teachers and other adults. "Winning," she declared, "is a by-product of hard work, X's and O's, and the right mental adjustment."

It has worked for 13 years for this coach, and whatever the score, she comes out a winner.

Letters to the editor

Get back to the basics

Dear Editor:

We would direct a question and an observation to the conservative and moderate factions of our great denomination.

Question: Is your position on Holy Scripture to such a degree that it will cause you to abandon our missionary cause of spreading the gospel and beyond that to the support of these in the field? Is this not the very thing that makes us Southern Baptist?

Observation: You should keep your differences out of the public unsaved arena. It seems you are speaking in tongues, the news media as your interpreter, without love and good godly sense. Your efforts in the areas of legal, political, and monetary resources could be much better applied to the people in the field who have sacrificed much and have need of our total support. You should be a good steward of your position.

When we cease to go and tell, we cease to be.

Louis P. Moran
Jack C. "Chuck" Provine Jr.
Fort Worth, Texas

V. L. Stanfield touched lives

Editor:

Baptists, and especially Mississippi Baptists, lost a great friend on March 4 when Dr. V. L. Stanfield died. He taught homiletics for many years at both Southern and New Orleans seminaries. His many students loved him and learned much from sitting in his classes. Perhaps no one this side

of heaven knows how many lives he has touched and will touch through his own ministry and the ministries of his students.

Dr. Stanfield was a genuine Christian gentleman, a warm and understanding friend, and a great encourager. He had a keen sense of humor and was the master of the pun. He used to say, "I went to school to study how to be a wit but I only got half-way through!" He tried to impress upon us, his students, that 20 minutes was long enough to preach if we were really well-prepared. Sadly, few of us could say as much in so few words as he could.

In the final analysis, it is clear that Dr. V. L. Stanfield invested his life in others. That's the way Jesus taught him to do it. When a person makes that kind of investment, his contributions to the good of mankind never end. We, his students, will miss Dr. Stanfield but we are confident that at last he has met face-to-face the Jesus he proclaimed!

David W. Spencer, pastor
First Baptist Church
Long Beach

A weed doesn't need any special care or attention. It will grow just anywhere, whereas a flower, a crop, or a garden needs extra attention and cultivation.

A person of this world is like the weed and a child of God is like the flower. A person of this world is natural to it but a child of God is "out of place, contrary to its surroundings" and needs that "extra" to stay above and beyond. — Linda S. Leach, Greenville.



OUT OF DARKNESS - LIGHT

By Roger A. Paynter

On Easter Sunday, everything is bright. People are dressed in brilliant colors, children hunt brightly decorated eggs, and there is white everywhere, from the sanctuary lights to the waxy Easter lilies. This is as it should be, or so we believe. After all, we are celebrating the Light which has come into the world and which the darkness cannot overcome (John 1:5).

And yet, Easter really begins in the darkness.

"Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early," the Gospel of John tells us, "while it was still dark." Because John uses "darkness" to mean literally the time before dawn and our spiritual condition, he is sending a double message. Mary and Peter and all those who came to the tomb were there not only before sunrise, but they were there with all their despair as well. Jesus was dead and so were their hopes. Their lives were engulfed by darkness. Death was the victor, it seemed,

and the Light which had come into the world had been overcome. They were drowning in their own darkness.

But out of the darkness the word was whispered, "Mary." And in the dim light before dawn, Mary recognized the Resurrected Lord. Therein lies the great and glad news, that in the midst of our deepest darkness, when we have given up all hope, when death seems a thousand times stronger than life, when joy has dissolved into the humdrum of everyday, when we are in the grips of life-crushing sin, when despair is the only song we can sing, the Risen Christ, raised by the power of Almighty God, offers us the newness of Easter life as well. We, too, can be raised from the dead!

What a gift this is. And it is ours for the asking.

Paynter is pastor, Northminster Church, Jackson.

Testament sent by mail led to Noriega's conversion

By Mark Wingfield & Greg Warner

MIAMI (BP) — A small New Testament sent through the mail opened the door for two Southern Baptist evangelists to lead Manuel Noriega to profess faith in Jesus Christ.

Noriega, deposed leader of Panama, says he became a Christian May 15, 1990, while imprisoned in the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Miami. Noriega remains in the Miami prison pending trial on charges of drug trafficking.

Documentation of the conversion — mostly handwritten letters signed by Noriega — was provided to the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press and the Florida Baptist Witness, newsjournal of the Florida Baptist Convention, by Texas evangelists Clift Brannon and Rudy Hernandez, who have visited Noriega in prison four times.

Their testimony has been confirm-

ed by Tony Ponceti, a Miami Baptist layman who has been training Noriega in weekly discipleship sessions for seven months, and by Noriega's attorney, Frank Rubino.

"Este es un milagro" — "This is a miracle"

The story begins Jan. 4, 1990, when Brannon watched on national television as Noriega was led into the federal courthouse in Miami. The night before, Noriega had emerged from hiding in the Vatican Embassy in Panama, carrying a toothbrush and a Bible. The Bible was reportedly a souvenir given him by a priest as he left the embassy.

"I saw that scene and it touched by heart," recalled Brannon, 79, who lives in Longview, Texas. "I thought, here is a man searching for God. God spoke to my heart and told me to send the General a Soul Winner's New Testament."

The Soul Winner's New Testament is a marked testament with chain references and brief notes explaining basic Christian truths. It was developed by Brannon in 1972.

"I wrote him a little note and told him where to start," Brannon said. After searching through pages of directories for the address of the courthouse, Brannon mailed the package to Noriega, not knowing if the deposed ruler would receive it in prison.

Six days later, on Jan. 10, Noriega wrote Brannon: "I have received by mail your inspiring and spiritual communication. I have carried out the first and initial instructions from page 186. I thank God for his presence in my pathway. I have signed the decision on page 382."

The decision Noriega signed is a commitment to read the Bible daily and study the four chains of references contained in the Soul Winner's New Testament.

"That is very significant, because we believe the Bible is what led him under conviction," Brannon said. "He continued to read and study it."

Then on Jan. 15, Noriega called Brannon, with the help of David Fernandez, a paralegal aide working for Rubino. At the same time, a gathering of pastors in Dallas was praying for Noriega at Brannon's request.

Brannon recalled beginning his first conversation with Noriega by getting right to the point: "General, God loves you and gave his son for you. Your mother was inspired when she named you Emmanuel. Emmanuel means God with us. But you can never say God is with you until you open your heart to him."

After that phone conversation, Brannon realized he needed



NORIEGA AND ATTORNEY — Manuel Noriega confers with his attorney, Frank Rubino, during a rare photo opportunity inside the chapel at the Metropolitan Correctional Center near Miami. Through the witness of two Southern Baptist evangelists, Noriega claims to have become a Christian. Clift Brannon of Longview, Texas, sent Noriega a copy of the New Testament through the mail in January 1990 and was later invited by Noriega to visit him in prison. Brannon was joined by Rudy Hernandez of San Antonio, Texas. The two have visited Noriega in prison four times since May 1990. Tony Ponceti, a Miami layman, has visited Noriega nearly every week since that time. (BP photo by William Gentile)

assistance because of the language barrier. Noriega speaks Spanish; Brannon does not. So Brannon contacted Hernandez, who was an international ministry among Spanish-speaking people.

A series of letters transpired over the next weeks, culminating in a request by Noriega for Brannon and Hernandez to visit him in Miami. With the permission of the warden and the chaplain, and after background checks and references, arrangements

"I thank God for his presence in my pathway."

for the May 15 visit were made.

Brannon and Hernandez agreed to strict conditions of confidentiality before they were allowed to see Noriega. "We were cleared by the FBI and everybody else before we could get in," Hernandez said.

On May 15, the chaplain chaperoned the two evangelists into the prison. Noriega's first words upon seeing them, Hernandez recalled, were, "Este es un milagro" or, "This is a miracle."

Noriega, Brannon, Hernandez, and the chaplain sat almost knee-to-knee in a small room inside the prison.

Brannon did the teaching, with Hernandez providing interpretation and adding appropriate illustrations.

Hernandez said he and Brannon began by establishing some ground rules with Noriega, including a commitment to leave whenever Noriega was ready for them to go. "You can tell us when to stop and when to go," they said. "We don't want to give you anything you don't want or won't receive."

About an hour and a half into that session, the two men led Noriega in a prayer of confession and commitment to Jesus Christ, they said.

"It was a such a sweet, solemn moment," Hernandez recalled. "We were all crying."

Afterward, Brannon asked Noriega, "Where is Christ?" Noriega's reply, Brannon said, was, "En mi corazon" or, "In my heart."

The evangelists said they stayed another hour and a half that day, teaching Noriega basic Christian truths.

The next day, Brannon said he asked Noriega, "If your lawyer, Frank Rubino, should walk through the door at this moment, would you tell him that you have received Jesus Christ as savior?"

Brannon said Noriega replied, (See **NORIEGA** on page 8)



BAPTIST EVANGELISTS — Southern Baptist evangelists Rudy Hernandez, center, and Clift Brannon, right, talk with Miami Baptist layman Tony Ponceti, left, outside the Metropolitan Correctional Center, where Manuel Noriega is imprisoned. Hernandez and Brannon have visited the former Panamanian leader four times since May 15, 1990, when Noriega says he committed his life to Jesus Christ. Ponceti has met with Noriega weekly for the past seven months, leading him in MasterLife, a discipleship program developed by the Sunday School Board. (BP photo by Greg Warner)

"Growth start" conferences set for eight locations

A series of conferences are planned to help church leaders use Outreach Bible Study materials to reach lost persons in their communities.

There will be eight locations from which to choose on four dates. The dates and places are April 22, 6:30-9:30 p.m., Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale, and First Church, Starkville;

April 23, 6:30-9:30 p.m., First Church, Cleveland, and West Jackson Church, Tupelo;

April 24, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Parkview Church, Greenville, and East End Church, Columbus;

April 25, 6:30-9:30 p.m., North Greenwood Church, Greenwood, and Highland Church, Meridian.

The beginning times of the conferences are different from those noted in the Baptist Diary for the year.

Leaders include James Berthelot, Dan Phillips, and Sam Crouch, all of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Berthelot and Phillips are adult Sunday School consultants; Crouch is a youth consultant. Other leaders will be Wayne Edwards, minister of education at First Church, Clinton, and Keith Williams and Larry Salter, consultants for the MBCB's Sunday School Department.

Williams is adult consultant and Salter is youth consultant.

For details concerning the meetings, contact Keith Williams, MBCB, at 968-3800.

Crouch



Berthelot



Phillips

"BREAKTHROUGH is possible"

Piland urges Bible study outside church buildings

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE (BP) — With Sunday School enrollment in Southern Baptist churches topping eight million in 1990, Harry Piland believes the time is right for churches to consider expanding their Sunday morning Bible study concept to include Bible study groups meeting away from the church building.

For 1990, the SBC Sunday School enrollment grew to 8,009,498, an increase of 73,483 or 0.9 percent over the 1989 total of 7,936,015.

"The mainline Sunday School is alive and well in Southern Baptist churches," said Piland, director of the Sunday School Board's Sunday School division. "Our opportunity is to build upon the mainline Sunday School by establishing Bible study groups away from the church to reach others."

BREAKTHROUGH — reaching large numbers of unchurched people with the gospel — "really is possible," said Piland. "In spite of all the negative things in the world, I believe we're on the edge of breakthrough. People are looking for meaning in life. This is our grand opportunity."

He cited First Church of Arlington, Texas, which is now conducting Sunday morning and evening Bible study groups in more than 100 apartment complexes in the Arlington area.

On the first Sunday in March, attendance in the Bible study groups meeting away from the church was 1,476, while 1,826 gathered at the church for Sunday School.

Tillie Burgin, who coordinates the Bible study groups, said it is vital that a church give strong emphasis to the ongoing Sunday School while also reaching out with Bible study and ministry to persons in the community.

"We take church to them," she said. "Our groups don't have their own buildings, so the facilities may not be as nice. But we have the same message."

In another area, Piland said several states experienced turnarounds in enrollment in 1990. North Carolina registered a numerical enrollment

gain of 6,831 to a new total of 655,748 after four consecutive years of small decreases. North Carolina ranked fifth among state conventions in numerical gains behind Texas, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama.

While enrollment is the basic standard for measuring Sunday School growth, Piland said he was encouraged that Sunday School average attendance increased by a higher percentage in 1990 than enrollment.

Average attendance grew from 3,802,216 in 1989 to 3,851,340 in 1990, for a gain of 49,124 or 1.3 percent. The 1990 attendance increase followed three years of attendance declines. Just over 48 percent of those enrolled in Sunday School attend on any given Sunday.

Churches can increase Sunday School attendance, not by gimmicks, but by training teachers to do a better job of preparation and applying Bible truths to life needs.

For the future, Piland urged churches to expand their vision for growth beyond their own facilities and traditional time frames.

Lawson writes for BSSB.

New books from Convention Press

Instructional Media for Churches by David Tiller and Mancil Ezell (77 page notebook, \$8.50). The mastery of the overhead and video.

Breakthrough: Single Adult Sunday School Work by Ruth Ann Hill, compiler, (159 pp., \$4.30). How-to-do-it guide.

Breakthrough: Youth Sunday School Work by Myrtle Veach (224 pp., \$5.60). How-to-do-it guide.

How to Witness With Media by James H. Rose (95 pp., \$4.50). How to use the media in witnessing and ministering.

Preaching That Heals by James E. Hightower Jr. and Martin Thielen, compilers, (143 pp., \$7.95). Wounded and hurting people are in the pews every Sunday.

MISSIONARIES

From page 3

sionaries in Scotland, are transferring to Czechoslovakia and will be on the job there later this year.

— Another missionary couple is scheduled to transfer to Romania later this year, but already several short-term medical volunteers have worked in the Bacau area of eastern Romania. The Foreign Mission Board earlier provided more than \$1 million for a major grain project in that area after the 1989 revolution.

— Missionaries Errol and Mary Simmons have served more than two years in Budapest, Hungary — the first Southern Baptist missionaries to live in an Eastern Bloc country since World War II. They have helped establish and administer the International Baptist Lay Academy. The school is providing basic Bible instruction and English-language training for Baptists from throughout Eastern Europe. IBLA is jointly sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board, the European Baptist Federation and the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, in cooperation with Hungarian Baptists.

— Eleven International Service Corps workers have joined the Simmons in recent months. Most are

teaching English, but one couple is doing evangelism work. Several already have completed their terms.

— Missionaries David and Lynda Bodenheimer will promote Christian education and administer Bible Way correspondence courses in Hungary. Edward and Eniko Jordan will work in church planting and general evangelism. Both couples will arrive by the end of May.

— Robert and Debbie Cochran have been transferred from Belgium to help evaluate and establish theological training programs throughout Eastern Europe.

— Missionary Tim Marza began ministry in Vienna, Austria, last year, where he is helping Romanian Baptists in media work.

— Paul Thibodeaux, the Vienna-based administrator for Southern Baptists' Eastern Europe mission, and Jim Smith, a missionary based in Berlin and partnership coordinator for the mission, have been working overtime during recent months to arrange partnership efforts between Southern Baptists volunteers and Baptists in Eastern Europe.

"There are so many positive and exciting things happening now. The main problem we have is just coordinating it all," said Parker.

Creswell writes for FMB.

NORIEGA

From page 7

"When you left yesterday afternoon, I immediately called him and told him I had trusted Christ as savior."

That call was later confirmed by Rubino.

At the end of that session, realizing they would have no evidence of their visit beyond their own testimony, Hernandez asked Noriega to write a note to Hernandez's grandson, who had requested an autograph. Noriega complied, writing a note not only to the grandson, but to Hernandez and to Brannon as well.

The note to Hernandez reads: "Memento of your spiritual assistance as I received Christ Jesus the 15th and 16th of May 1990."

Hernandez and Brannon visited Noriega again in July, September, and November of 1990. In the meantime, they enlisted Miami layman Tony Ponceti to train Noriega in the Christian faith. The Cuban-born Ponceti, who speaks fluent Spanish and had known Brannon in Texas, began weekly MasterLife sessions with Noriega which were still ongoing as of March 1991.

On Nov. 17-18, 1990, Hernandez visited Noriega's wife, Felicidad, and two of his daughters in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. During that visit, the three Noriega family members also became Christians, he said.

That information has been confirmed by Southern Baptist missionaries Mark and June Smith, who serve in the Dominican Republic and had contacted Mrs. Noriega prior to Hernandez's trip. Smith and missionary Bill Hagewood visited Mrs. Noriega at her request, then Hagewood returned with Hernandez to visit the family.

Mrs. Noriega has attended Templo Bautista Central and shared Thanksgiving lunch with the Smiths last November. The missionaries remain in contact with Mrs. Noriega, although she is not able to attend services regularly.

"By her name and her husband's exposure, she is not free just to go and do as she wants," Smith explained. "She tries to keep a low profile."

Mrs. Smith, who has become a friend to Noriega's wife, said Mrs. Noriega shows evidence of a spiritual conversion. "She's very eager to learn. She has a real desire to know more about the Lord and trust him with what her life has become."

Brannon and Hernandez attempted

to visit Noriega again March 11, 1991. That visit was pre-empted because Noriega was moved temporarily and without notice to the downtown courthouse to prepare for part of his trial.

Brannon, Hernandez, and Ponceti report that Noriega has asked to be baptized. They had hoped to perform the baptism during their March 11 visit. Instead, they met with warden Stephen Pontesso to try to get permission for the baptism at a later date.

Where to baptize Noriega is a problem. There is no suitable facility in the building where he is held and no chance of transporting him elsewhere.

One possibility is to use a small lake within the prison compound. Noriega walks around the lake late at night when all other inmates are locked in their cells.

The trio of Baptists continue to work out details, noting the baptism would be just another miracle in a 14-month episode fraught with miracles. They claim their entire mission has been fueled by prayer and a belief that the impossible can be possible.

If there has been a theme of their work, it is taken from (the Old Testament book of) Jeremiah 33:3, a verse they have each quoted repeatedly and even Noriega quoted in a public courtroom during a pre-trial hearing: "Call to me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you do not know."

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Senior adult corner

Senior Adult Area-wide Bible Study was held at First Church, Gulfport, Feb. 25-28. The theme was "Acts: The Gospel for All People" which is the January Bible Study theme. The Bible study leaders were Joe McIntire, Grace Memorial Church; Dean Register, First Church, Gulfport; Nathan Barber, First Church, Bay St. Louis; Bobby Perry, director of missions, Gulf Coast Association; and Frank Gunn, First Church, Biloxi. Average attendance was 81. The senior adults of First Church, Gulfport, served breakfast on Thursday.

Revival dates

Noxapater Church, Noxapater (Winston): March 31-April 3; Sunday, 11 a.m., 6 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m.; George Jackson, pastor of Egypt Church, Memphis, evangelist; Doug Hubbard, music; Wayne Sanders is pastor, Noxapater.

Center Ridge Church, Yazoo City (Yazoo): Mar. 31-April 3; Ed Griffin, evangelist; Randall Hall, music; "Praying for Power," theme; Sunday, 6 p.m.; 7 p.m. Mon-Wed.; Bryan Abel, pastor; Stephen Bath, minister of youth and music.

Bellevue Church, (Pontotoc): April 3-5; 7 p.m. nightly; Charlie Swords, visiting preacher; Lee Graham, pastor.

Chester Church (Choctaw): March 31-April 3; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon-Wed., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Gary Bowlin, Brandon, evangelist; Allen Black, Jackson, music evangelist; Rob Faulk, pastor.

Macedonia Church (Lee): March 31-April 3; Sunday services will begin with presentation of Easter musical "Come See The Place" at 11 a.m.; Sunday night, 5:45; Mon-Wed., 7 p.m.; Mike Johnson, pastor, Martintown Church in Union County, evangelist; Dexter Griggs, music; Marion Payne, pastor.

Revival results

Oral Church, Sumrall (Lamar): March 8-12; Gary Rivers, Gadsden, Ala., evangelist; Mr. and Mrs. David Lee, Sumrall, music; 19 professions of faith; B. J. Barrett, pastor.

Holly Church, Corinth (Alcorn): March 3-8; Randy Isbell, Savannah, Tenn., evangelist; Gary Crum, Corinth, music; 16 professions of faith; one addition by letter; Philip Cooper, pastor.

Meadowview Church, Starkville: started March 3; was to end March 6, but continued through March 12 because leaders felt let to continue; Bruce Gill, Hammond, La., evangelist; Bobby and Lollie Ready, Baton Rouge, La., music; 72 professions of faith, including 12 church members; 26 baptisms; seven by letter.

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Just for the Record

Thursday, March 28, 1991

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9



First Church, Ridgeland, recently held a recognition service for GAs. Those honored were, left to right, front row, Courtney Sims, Lynley Sanders, Khristen Neil, Jodi DeMoney, back row, Doris Langham, GA director, Helena McDaniels, Brandi Kolb, Kristen Cheeks, and Linda Truesdale. Not shown are Jackie Stepp, Christy Ross, and leaders Cindy Bryant and Helena Houpt.

First Church, Yazoo City, will have Good Friday services on March 29, at 7 p.m., and will feature the observance of the Lord's Supper, accompanied by the living tableau of "The Last Supper," a painting by Leonardo da Vinci.

Added to this year's presentation for the second time in as many years will be a choral work by Lani Smith entitled, "A Service of Shadows." This work features the sanctuary choir, soloists, and readers. Music will be under the direction of Mrs. James A. Henley Jr., music ministry coordinator at First Church. Accompanists will be the church's musicians, Mrs. Gaye Sikes, organist, and Mrs. Carol Powell, pianist. Staging and drama will be directed by Mrs. James F. Yates.

On Easter Sunday, March 31, there will be special music at both the 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. services, as well as messages by James F. Yates, pastor.

Robinhood Church, Brandon, will observe Easter Sunrise Services at 6 a.m. in the sanctuary. A program of special Easter music will be conducted by Alton Webb, music director. Don Nerren, pastor, will bring a special Easter message. The service will conclude with the observance of baptism and The Lord's Supper.



Maurice F. Wicker (right) presents a check for \$1,300 to David Fortenberry, pastor of New Salem Church of Route 1, Liberty. Wicker is the state convention board member from Mississippi Association. Funds for church building aid come from the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering and are administered through the Cooperative Missions Department for new churches. New Salem Church began as a mission church on Oct. 4, 1987. It was constituted and admitted into the association in October, 1989. The church has purchased brick and is now laying them around the building. Their new building is located next to their present sanctuary which they purchased from New Salem Nazarene Church.



Castlewoods Church, Jackson, will host "A Devotional In Sculpture" by **Sam Gore** on Good Friday, March 29, 7:30 p.m. Gore is a producing sculptor and painter, and has served on the faculty of Mississippi College since 1951 as professor and chairman of the art department. Above, Gore sculpts The Head of Christ from a mass up to twice life size.



Michael Bufkin, pianist for Northside Church, Vicksburg, is pictured receiving the key to a new Weber Grand Piano from Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Barrett. The Barretts recently donated the piano to the church.

On Sunday evening, March 3, Michael presented a solo concert on the instrument as it was dedicated to worship and praise. Robert E. Walker is pastor.



Children and youth of **Immanuel Church, Cleveland**, collected 180 pounds of pennies for its "Pounds of Pennies for Missions" drive during the month of December for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Pictured are, front row, Jenny Gladden, Claire Dye; second, Jennifer Gilder, Heather Kovarick, Valerie Dye, Merry Claire Ballard, John Clendinning; third, Jay Burchfield, Brent Smith, Emily Dye; fourth, John Burchfield, Denise Arinder, Bo Peyton, Jenny Coleman; fifth, Tommy Arinder, pastor, Jeff Jones, Robin Rainey, Paula Rainey, and David Gladden.

The adult and youth choirs of **First Church, Crystal Springs**, will present a musical, "Celebrate Life," on Saturday, March 30, and Sunday, March 31. The musical's book and lyrics are by Ragan Courtney; music by Burl Red. Both presentations will begin at 7 p.m. in the church auditorium. For more information call 892-1149.

Staff changes

Crystal Springs Church, Tylertown, has called **Leslie "Les" Hughes** as pastor, effective March 3. A native of Louisville, Ky., he is a graduate of Mississippi College and plans to receive a degree from New Orleans Seminary in May. His previous place of service was Mountain Creek Church in Florence.

Calvary Church, Jackson, will have Good Friday service, March 29, from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. No lunch will be served. James W. Street is pastor.

Southwestern Singers to perform in Clinton

The Southwestern Singers, a select vocal group from Southwestern Seminary will perform at First Church, Clinton, on April 14.

The group is comprised of 40 singers and is under the direction of Joseph King, professor of conducting and chairman of the conducting and ensemble activities department at the seminary. King has been a member of Southwestern's music faculty for 15 years.

Conference is planned for helping caregiving families

A conference is planned for helping caregiving families — that is, those who provide long-term care for victims of trauma and developmental disorders or the elderly. The program is for caregivers themselves, for health professionals, church ministers and volunteers, and for support groups.

The conference will take place April 9 at the Holiday Inn Downtown. The meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. with registration and coffee, and concludes at 4 that afternoon. A special session for family caregivers will take place from 7-8:30 that evening.

Morning topics and speakers include "Encouragement: A Therapeutic Process," and "Techniques of Encouragement," both led by Bill and Pat Bouchillon. The couple will also speak that evening in a special session for family caregivers on "Encouragement Applied: Helping the Caregiver Cope."

Bill Bouchillon is professor of psychology at Union University. Pat Bouchillon has a private practice in Jackson, Tenn.

Concurrent workshops will be offered for families of the traumatized, the elderly, developmental disorders, and a spouse.

Organizations cooperating in the meeting are MC's School of Education

counseling programs, the School of Nursing, Department of Home Economics, Department of Sociology and Social Work, and the Department of Church Administration/Pastoral Ministries of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Cost of the day sessions are \$35; the evening session is \$5. To register, write "Families: Nurturing the Caregiver" at Box 4185, Mississippi College, Clinton, MS 39058.

If there be any value in scaling the mountains, it is only that from them one can behold the plains. — G. K. Chesterton

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Names in the news

Holly Hollman is serving as a spring semester intern in the legal services department of the Baptist Joint Committee in Washington.



Hollman

Her responsibilities have included research, writing, word processing, and constituent services.

A daughter of Harold and Jo Hollman of Jackson, and a granddaughter of Glenn

Smith of Philadelphia, she is a member of Northminster Church in Jackson.

Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel Oliver S. Thomas described Hollman as "a rare combination of intellect, dedication, and a winsome personality. The Baptist Joint Committee has had an uncanny ability to attract quality interns and Holly is one of the best."

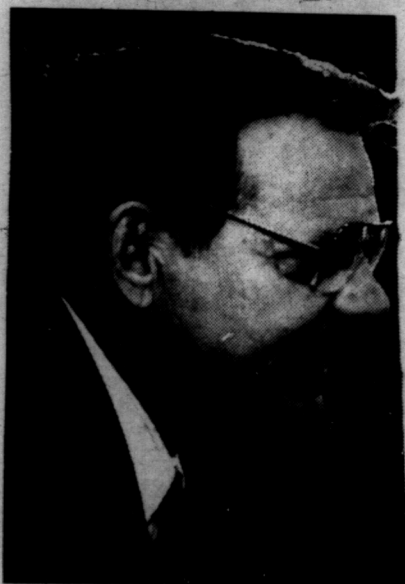
Fred E. Robertson, pastor of Bowmar Avenue Church, Vicksburg, will retire at the conclusion of the Sunday evening service on June 30, concluding 39 years in the



Robertson

pastorate. He served in both the Mississippi and Louisiana Baptist Conventions, 23 years were served as pastor of Parkway Church in Natchez and Bowmar Avenue Church in Vicksburg. Other pastorates include Hebron Church in Jones County, Union Church in Smith County, and First Church in Canton.

As of July 1, he will be available for interim pastor, revival preacher, and etc. He may be contacted at 110 Woodstock Drive, Vicksburg, MS 39180 or call (601) 638-2838.



John Herrington of Sallis, left, and Bob Little of Starkville, right, share their Praxis experiences with students and faculty during a recent chapel service at New Orleans Seminary. Praxis is a 10-week project in communities across the country that are perceived as targets for planting churches. Herrington, a student in the seminary's associate's degree program, was assigned to plant a church in Garden Grove, Fla. Little, a student in the master of divinity program, and his wife Amy, were assigned to plant a church in Keokuk, Iowa. (Photo by Kevin Devine)

Dave Smith retired from the active pastorate, effective March 31. He is available for pulp supply, revivals, and interim work.

Smith has been serving at Pleasant Hill Church in Calhoun County for four years. He has served churches in Tennessee, his native state; Michigan; and Mississippi, his adopted state; for 35 years.

He and his wife, Inez, will be residing at Route 1, Box 592 B, Mooreville, MS 38857. His telephone number is 680-5603.



Curtis Askew commemorated the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the ministry on March 3 at First Church, Sardis, where he was set apart to preach the gospel in 1941. He delivered the evening message, and afterwards was honored at a reception attended by Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian friends, along with other guests. Askew served 25 years as a Southern Baptist missionary to Japan, and later pastored churches in Honolulu, Hawaii. He also served as a faculty member on the Honolulu campus of Wayland University. He and his wife, the former Mary Lee Trenor, currently are living in Albuquerque, N.M. Emanuel Stepp, deacon chairman, is pictured presenting a plaque to Askew.

Troy Donahoe Jr. was recently ordained to the gospel ministry by Poplar Avenue Church, Memphis, Tenn., where he is associate pastor and minister of education and evangelism. He is also a student at Mid-America Seminary. Donahoe moved to Memphis from Oak Grove Church, Shubuta. Ray Fullilove, pastor, officiated with W. D. Burke of Memphis. T. R. Coulter of Laurel presented the charge messages. His wife is the former Mary J. Albritton of Shubuta.



Campus revival to be held at Clarke

Clarke College Ministerial Association will sponsor a campus revival, April 8-11. Services will be held at Lott Fine Arts Building auditorium on campus at 7:30 p.m.

Principal speakers will be Ernest Penton Jr., Pearl River, La.; Dewey Norvell, Lucedale; and Micky Breedlove, Philadelphia.

Sunday School directors will meet April 5 and 6

All Mississippi Baptist Sunday School directors are invited to a conference designed to increase their effectiveness.

The conference will take place April 5 and 6 at the Baptist Building in Jackson.

The conference will help directors understand the future of Sunday School work in their churches, know if their Sunday Schools are effective, and know how to grow Sunday Schools. The meeting will also offer a discussion of the latest in Sunday School curricula and resources for all

age groups.

Conference leader is Joel Harrison, director of religious education for the Atlanta Baptist Association.

Sessions include a description of a Sunday School director's job: "You Mean There's More to Being a Sunday School Director Than Ringing the Bell?" Other topics include tasks of the Sunday School, planning for a year's worth of Sunday School work, and "Grow is a Four-Letter Word."

The program begins at 7 p.m. on April 5 and concludes at 3 the following afternoon. A registration fee of \$10 will provide lunch on Saturday and conference materials.

To participate, write Keith Williams, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Mississippians take part in India crusades

Tom and Kay Cox of Arkansas returned in February from their 10th annual crusades to India. This was a project of partnership evangelism of the Foreign Mission Board, SBC. There were 32 team members from the following states: Texas, Arkansas, California, Ohio, Idaho, Missouri, North Dakota, Illinois, Iowa, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Oklahoma, and Colorado. One team member was from France. Team member from Mississippi was Jennifer Monie of Meridian.

The teams conducted medical and dental clinics; taught Bible School, and taught in a Bible college. Large evangelistic crusades were held by the teams during the evening. "There were over 5,000 professions of faith and thousands of people were helped by the medical and dental teams," reports the Tom Cox Evangelistic Association. The teams ministered in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and under the direction of the Baptist Mission in Bangalore, India.

MEGA CHURCH

From page 2

to 38 in the last five years. Still, with a total membership of about 260,000, these churches represent only a small minority of SBC membership.

Fitch shared with conference participants several characteristics of mega church Sunday Schools garnered from the 1990 Uniform Church Letter report. Statistics showed that the average Sunday School attendance in mega churches is 41.5 percent, compared to the SBC average of 48.1 percent. Other statistics revealed:

— The average worship attendance in mega churches is 49.5 percent of their Sunday School enrollment.

— Mega churches average 1,400 new members per year in Sunday School with an attrition rate of 1,200, leaving a new member growth rate of 200 people per year.

— One person is baptized in mega churches for every 10 members who attend Sunday School regularly. The same one in 10 ratio was reported conventionwide.

There are three ingredients in the good life: learning, earning, and yearning. — Christopher Morley

Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote.

Missionary news

James and Linda Barron, missionaries to Portugal, are on the field (address: c/o Azorian Baptist Church, Rua dos Fortinhas, 9760 Praia de Vitoria, Terceira, Azores, Portugal). He was born in Huntsville, Ala., and grew up near Clarksville. The former Linda Rierson, she was born in Greensboro, N.C., and grew up in Newport News, Va.

Asbury and Hope Martin, missionaries to Argentina, are on the field (address: La Paz 18333, 2000 Rosario, Argentina). He was born in Columbia, S.C., and considers Cleveland his hometown. She is the former Hope Clements of Corinth.

Mike and Annette Racey, missionaries to Chile, are on the field (address: Casilla 50-D, Temuco, Chile). They consider Biloxi their hometown. The former Annette Evans, she was born in Mobile, Ala.

Errol and Mary Simmons, Baptist representatives to Eastern Europe, are on the field (address: 1025 Budapest II, Mandula U. 25, mfszt. 1, Hungary). A native of Louisiana, he was born in Baton Rouge and grew up in Franklinton. The former Mary Ishee of Mississippi, she was born in Jones County and grew up near Laurel.

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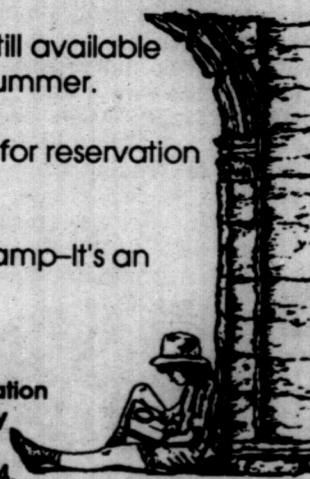
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That was Friday, but Sunday was comin'!

By Benny Still

John 20:19-20, 24-31

We have all heard folks make these statements: "He looks like he's seen a ghost!" and "He's as white as a sheet!" If we could have been in the room with the ten disciples when Jesus appeared to them following the crucifixion and his triumphant resurrection, we might have made the same observations about them. The fact that Jesus' first words to them were, "Peace be with you!" is indicative that there may have been lots of dismay and faint-heartedness present on their faces when the Saviour arrived (v. 19). What joy was theirs when they realized that this was, indeed, their risen leader. Only after seeing the scars in his hands and side was their joy complete (v. 20).

Many times I've heard preachers and teachers bring out Thomas' "lack of faith" in requesting to see proof of the other disciples' claim that they had seen the risen Christ. Do we sometimes miss the fact that the other disciples were not comfortable in the presence of the risen Lord either until they had seen with



Still

LIFE AND WORK

their own eyes his nail-scarred hands and pierced side (vv. 24-25)? After a week of hearing his friends talk about the risen Lord and his appearance to them, Thomas must have been "green with envy" that they had seen Jesus and he had not. Imagine your own feelings in such a situation. When Jesus finally did appear to the disciples — this time with Thomas present — again, he prefaced his remarks with "Peace be with you!" and proceeded immediately to speak to the doubt and frustration in Thomas. He offered the same proof of his resurrection to Thomas as he did to the others. And then, in the same breath, he admonished Thomas to stop doubting and start believing (vv. 26-27).

Standing in the presence of Jesus, the risen Son of God, Thomas would have been hard pressed not to have believed! What a statement: "My Lord and my God!" (v. 28). Belief in the risen Son of God leads persons to confess him as the Master and God. In verse 29 I see Jesus affirming Thomas for his acceptance of him and, at the same time, pronouncing a blessing on all of us who have lived since and have believed in him without having seen visibly the proof of his resurrection. Belief in Jesus as the

risen Lord does not require an active imagination, but it does require that we actively exercise our faith to the extent that we fully believe and trust in him.

The events of the preceding Friday must have overwhelmed the disciples. So much so that they were huddled in a room fearing the same fate as Jesus if they were found. Little did they know that their fear and depression would be dispelled for all eternity just three days later.

The events of Friday were painful and demoralizing. But Sunday was comin'! How unfortunate that Thomas was not with them when Jesus first appeared. Unfortunate that Thomas' fear, doubt, and depression had to linger a week longer than was really necessary. How like Thomas we are. The advice and encouragement of friends is many times not enough to help us rise above our depravity and personal longing. But when we finally see that our worries, fears, and frustrations have been unfounded — that there is hope, and joy, and satisfaction in the truth of our Lord — there is nothing we can do but shout with Thomas the resounding: "My Lord and my God!"

Someone has said, "confession is good for the soul." How true that is when such confession leads to acceptance of Jesus as Saviour of our souls and Lord of our lives. Without such confession, we are most miserable. Without such

a realization of Jesus' victory over sin, death, and the grave, our futures are most bleak and our eternal security in great jeopardy. But when we come to grips with what Jesus did on the cross, we suddenly are made aware of the wonderful assurance that because he was victorious, we can be too!

Our lives may seem hopeless, empty, lonely, and afraid. Our hearts may grieve, hurt, and suffer deep longing. Our days may be filled with depression, pain, hunger, and despair. Our families may disappoint us. Our children may dishonor us. Our friends may leave and forsake us. The darkness may set in around us and all about us may seem hopeless — just as it did for the disciples. But let us remind you, today is just a Friday, Sunday's comin'! It came for Jesus. With the knowledge that once we allow him residence in our lives, he never leaves or forsakes, we can be victorious over our Fridays with the calm assurance that Sunday's comin'!

Has Sunday come for you yet? You have heard about him. You have read about what he did for you. Others have given witness to you about what they have experienced through him. Isn't it about time we all shout with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"? When we do, our Sunday will have come!

Still is pastor, Poplar Springs Church, Mendenhall.

Jesus' triumph over death . . . and all lesser enemies

By Jerry Vardaman

Luke 24:1-53

The truth is always straightforward and simple, and this is what we find in Luke. On the Sunday following Jesus' death, his friends came with spices to use in his burial. The Talmud tells of this practice which was done to retard the foul odors generated in the decomposition of the body (Berakot 24). Such preparations were very expensive, since myrrh, for example, had to be brought 1200 miles from S. Arabia. Man's involvement was not necessary here, however, since Jesus' disciples found the tomb empty (1-12).



Vardaman

Note now the sublime simplicity of the Gospel record in telling of the journey of two of Jesus' disciples on the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus (13-35), and of Jesus' walking with them part of the way. This is only one of the appearances of Jesus following his resurrection. He shows himself repeatedly and at various places to his disciples to attest the historicity of the events. Emmaus means in Hebrew "the place of the hot springs," but this spot is difficult to identify with exactness. Possibly, it is the spot called Amwas today, which means the same

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thing in Arabic. If so, these disciples' journey must have taken almost all day, and when they completed it, they were at the lower end of the mountain ridge on which Jerusalem is located. But when they finally recognized Jesus, they hastened back to Jerusalem to tell the victorious story of his triumph over death.

Thomas Jefferson was president of our country between 1801-1809. He was accused of not being a Christian, due to his deism (a belief that God set the world in motion under control of cosmic laws, and that God no longer needed to be involved in it, etc.). This position of Jefferson got him into trouble politically; his disbelief was going to be used against him when he ran for the office of president, so he decided to excerpt a collection of passages from the New Testament of those things which he could affirm, to show that he was a Christian! He used scissors and paste to arrange those passages which were in accord with his beliefs, and the result of this effort is known today as the "Jefferson Bible." Significantly, in those critical passages, which almost all Christians fully accept, Thomas Jefferson left out the account of Jesus' resurrection. His "Bible" stops with Jesus placed in the tomb; the tomb is then closed, and so is Jefferson's Bible!

ed, and so is Jefferson's Bible!

Jefferson's dead Jesus is not able to save him, nor anyone else. There are some things which are essential to our faith. One can not believe that Jesus was just a great teacher and be saved as a result. One must affirm his humanity, his claim to be Son of God, his death for our sins, his resurrection, and his Lordship to be a disciple of Jesus. We must be committed to Jesus as Lord if we would be saved, not just look at him distantly, and with no interest in his claims on our lives. If he is the Son of God and Lord, then all that I am, or own, belongs to him. This same commitment is demanded of every true follower of Jesus today, no less than it was demanded of those disciples in Jesus' day. They did not have to be forced to return to Jerusalem to tell the story of his resurrection. They joyfully returned to share their experiences with the living Lord.

To further substantiate the account of the resurrection, Jesus appeared in the midst of these disciples from Emmaus while they were telling their story in Jerusalem to his other disciples there (36-53). No one needed to question and wonder any longer. They could see and handle the living Christ for themselves. This is how Jesus manifests himself personally to each one of his friends today. No one needs to persuade his followers concerning his resurrection. We have experienced the living Christ in our

daily walk and we believe and know that he is alive and sufficient for every problem we might be called upon to face.

We see in the final verses of the story that our faith in Jesus has some strong missionary implications (47-53). Jesus' disciples were to share this good news with others, just as those faithful disciples at Emmaus had done, and just as those faithful followers at Jerusalem had done: "... forgiveness of sin should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." In effect, for too many professing Christians today, their lifestyle would change this verse to read the last three words here as "... ending at Jerusalem." What we have received we are to pass on to others who need this vital message just as we did, before we committed all to Jesus. In the Gospel of John, we are told that Jesus' disciples (in their pre-resurrection ignorance) wrapped Jesus in bandages which had been soaked in molten myrrh (like hardened gum of pine trees) and departed (19:38-42). This is how some people regard Jesus today; yet he will not stay in that restrictive cocoon, but breaks out to deal with life's needs in his triumphant power, and to direct us in missionary conquests. This Savior, who is sufficient for the death problem we have, can handle every other need we face.

Vardaman is professor of archaeology, Mississippi State University.

Victory over death because Jesus is victorious

By Ruth N. Allen

I Corinthians 15:12-22, 53-58

First century Corinth was one of the most pagan of the paganistic cities. Historically, the pagan world had little or no comfort to offer those who mourned the loss of a loved one. The many confused notions among pagans revealed no satisfactory concept of eternal life. A survey of heathen art revealed nothing but hopelessness — a shattered pillar, a ship gone to pieces, a race lost, a harp lying on the ground with snapped strings, a flower bud crushed, and sand all down in an hourglass. Evidently, some of the Corinthian church members were still influenced by the pagan fatalistic view of life after death. However, Christians find their comfort and hope in the symbolism of the open tomb.



Allen

Paul begins by showing undeniable proofs of the resurrection of Jesus. He brings witness after witness, even five hundred at one time, who, during the forty days between the resurrection and ascension, saw Jesus, touched him,

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heard him talk, and walked with him at different times in various places. Later on, Paul himself meets Jesus on the road to Damascus, sees him, and hears him. Jesus must be alive!

If Jesus had not been raised, all else is futile (15:12-19).

The eternal hope of all Christianity is based on the fact of the resurrection. If Jesus had not risen, all preaching of all times is futile and absolutely worthless. Millions and millions of people have been deluded. Thousands upon thousands of martyrs have given their lives for nothing. The hope of eternal life has been dashed. Reduced to simple terms, Christianity is a lie, and Jesus is a liar if he did not rise from the dead. Thanks be to God that he has been raised from the dead and is alive!

Christ has risen indeed (15:20-22)! In the earliest days of Christianity, Easter was the greatest festival of the Christian year, just as it is today. The Roman Christians called it "Dominica Guadii," meaning "Joyful Sunday." All customary forms of salutations were laid aside on that day and as Christian met

Christian on the streets of Rome, he would say, "Christ is risen." Back came the joyful response, "He is risen, indeed!"

Christ has risen, indeed, and has become the "firstfruits" from the dead. Jesus has the distinction to be the first person to die, to be raised from the dead, and to remain alive. Others were raised from the dead and restored to life but later died a second death. Jesus our Lord died, but he "ever lives to make intercession for us." Therefore, because he lives, those who trust in him have the assurance that they too shall live.

There is victory in Jesus (15:53-57).

During a diphtheria epidemic, a family lost three children in less than a week. Their last, only child, a three year old, escaped. The following Sunday was Easter; and according to their custom, the family went to church. The mother taught her Sunday School class, and the father assumed his duties as Sunday School director. He read the Easter story from the Gospels and led in the worship period, with only a break now and then in his voice. "How could they do it?" the people said to each other as they left the church. One fifteen year old boy said to his father, "Dad, I guess Mr. and Mrs.

Smith really believe it, don't they?" "Believe what?" asked the father. "The whole big thing, all of it, Easter, you know," replied the boy. Jesus has made it possible by his resurrection; believers show it by faith.

Because Jesus is victorious, we too, can be victorious (15:58).

Paul urges his readers to be steadfast in service to Jesus and his church. Readers are instructed to live triumphantly, assured of Jesus' perpetual presence and power. Jesus promised in his words to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades (grave) shall not prevail against it." Death is the gate through which all must pass to enter life beyond this world. Fear of this passage devastates many people. A Christian's assurance of Jesus' triumphal resurrection constitutes his greatest source of serenity in a world of sin and trouble.

The hymn writer expresses well the concept of victory in Christ. "He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me, and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, he lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know he lives: he lives within my heart."

Allen of Jackson, is the wife of Judd Allen, pastor of Ogden Church, Bentonla.

CHILDREN'S PAGE

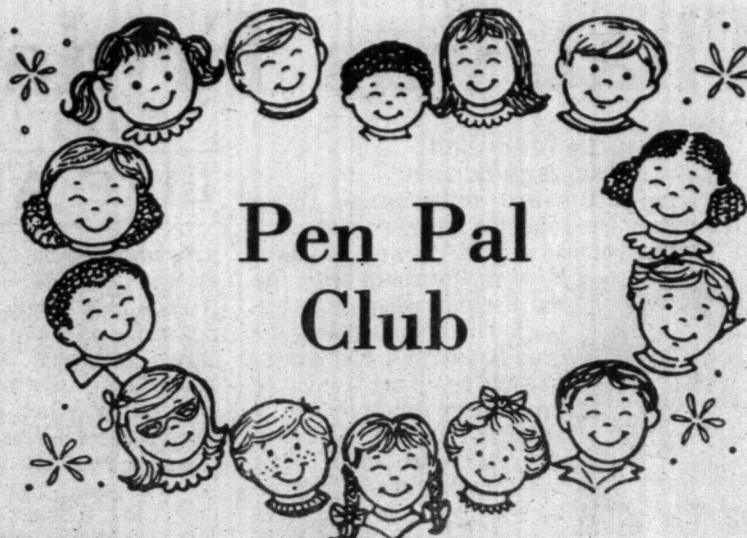
Who likes good soil?



Soil and Water Week
April 28 - May 5, 1991

Hidden in the puzzle are the names of 15 plants and animals. See how many you can find: egret, geese, swan, frog, water, violets, rabbits, bugs, lily, marsh, grouse, alligator, log, duck, owl, blue heron.

L G E R T V J X
Y B G E E S E D
M F R O G W T H
C K E N Z A U V
W A T E R M P I
C E G F A P X O
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E S A N X C W S
R H T E N K A V
O X O W L P N Y
N T R L O C B J
R H E Z G I J P



Pen Pal Club

Hi! My name is Melissa McNeil. I'm 12 years old. I go to Leaf River Baptist Church.

I like swimming and playing basketball. I would like a boy or girl to be my pen pal. Please send me a picture and your phone number if possible.

Love in Christ,
Melissa McNeil
Rt. 1, Box 131A
Loun, MS 39338

Hi!

My name is Kathryn Bell. I am eight years old and I go to Calvary Baptist Church in Gloster, Miss. I would like for a boy or girl to write me. My hobbies are: singing, riding my bike, fishing, playing ball, reading, and playing the piano. Also, I love going to school and church.

Please send a picture and the address.

Love in Christ,
Kathryn

My address is:
Kathryn Bell
P. O. Box 241
1130 West St.
Gloster, MS 39638

Hi!

My name is Anna Boykin. I'm 11 years old and live in Jackson, Miss. I go to St. Andrews Middle School in the fifth grade. I would like a nice boy or girl to write to me. My hobbies are riding horses, tennis and swimming,

soccer, and basketball. Please send a photo if you can.

Sincerely,
Anna Boykin

My address is:
Anna Boykin
105 Brae Burn Dr.
Jackson, MS 39211

Dear Friend,

My name is Jessica Thompson. And I am 10½. I go to a Christian school. I live in Yazoo City, Miss. and I want some body to write me soon. Please send me a picture of yourself.

Love Always,
Jessica

My address is:
2513 Clubview Circle
Yazoo City, MS 39194



Members of the Union Grove Church, Sunflower County, stand in the sanctuary of the new building, constructed with the help of Interstate, Morris Chapel, First, Cleveland, Calvary, Providence, and Skene Churches of Bolivar County.

Delta churches are good neighbors

By Tim Nicholas

Out in the country in the middle of the Mississippi Delta, an exercise in Christian relationships has been carried out over the past few months.

Last Sept. 7, the Union Grove Baptist Church in Sunflower County burned to the ground. The little black church which has about 100, mostly older, members didn't ask for help, but help came.

Just up the road from the church across the line into Bolivar County, some of the men asked Bolivar Director of Missions Odis Henderson, "Why can't we do something to help these folks?"

Henderson got his mission development council director, Doc Brown, gathered the pastor and two or three laymen from Providence Church, and the two pastors and some lay members of Union Grove for a meeting. "We met together to decide

about re-establishing the burned out church," said Henderson.

When Union Grove decided on putting up a metal building on a slab, Brown asked the Providence church to take over any volunteer labor needs.

Providence Pastor Eugene Walden took a group from Union Grove to another church to look at some pews that were on sale at a good price and helped transport those pews back to Cleveland.

The Zumbro Plantation, owned by Joe Smith, gave the little church a new lot on which to build. Smith even hand-built them a new pulpit.

Robert Cain, a professional builder whose wife is a member of Union Grove, supervised the volunteer carpentry teams. About 16 white men from the county provided the labor. Men came from Interstate, Morris

Chapel, First, Cleveland, Calvary, Providence, and Skene to help. Others gave cash. The men studded the walls and paneling and did the inside wiring.

Union Grove senior pastor S.B. Price, said he'd never seen an interracial project "on this order before" in his years in the Delta. He's 81.

One of the white volunteers said, "We can go to Argentina or Honduras and teach the gospel. Why can't we do it next door?"

Dollie Miller, a lay leader in Union Grove Church, said the church would use the new facilities as a place from which to grow. "We're planning on growing. We aren't going to sit still. You're supposed to grow in Christ," she said.

Nicholas is director, office of communications, MBCB.

Southwestern trustees approve record budget

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Trustees of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, approved a record \$19.8 million budget for 1991-92 and elected new officers during their semi-annual meeting March 11-12.

The seminary trustees, meeting on the Southwestern campus, re-elected James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Church of Euless, Texas, to a second term as chairman of the board. Also elected were Jim Bolton, a Dallas businessman and member of First Church, as vice chairman; and T. Bob Davis, a dentist from Dallas and member of Prestonwood Church, as secretary.

Projected Cooperative Program unified budget receipts account for 41 percent of the seminary's income in the coming year, the single largest source of income for the school.

But seminary officials and trustees voiced concern about the declining percentage of Cooperative Program money being allocated for the six SBC seminaries. That allocation, according to Hubert Martin, Southwestern's vice president for business affairs, has declined from 22 percent to 20 percent of the total SBC budget in recent years.

The 1991-92 budget includes an increase of \$50 in student matriculation fees, raising the cost per semester from \$450 to \$500 for each student in the spring and fall terms. The fee for the summer will be \$375.

During his report to the trustees, the seminary's President Russell Dilday updated the board on the recent visit of the academic accrediting team from the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association

of Colleges and Schools. Although the visiting team's final report has not been received, Dilday said the administration was optimistic about preliminary reports.

Recent efforts to form a Southern Baptist accrediting agency to replace ATS and SACS could harm the six SBC seminaries, Dilday told the trustees. Those efforts have surfaced as a result of problems at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. and Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Baptist Record

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March 28, 1991

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